

Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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E.9. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, KS

SUBJECT: LOCAL JOURNALISTS PROTEST INTERFERENCE WITH PRESS
FREEDOMS; NDP ISSUES SUPPORTING STATEMENT

REF: SEOUL 7066

1. SUMMARY: IN SERIES OF SEPARATE MEETINGS BEGINNING OCT 24, JOURNALISTS FROM SIX METROPOLITAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS HAVE ISSUED ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR RESOLUTIONS PROTESTING ROKG'S CONTINUING AS WELL AS VERY RECENT RESTRAINTS ON FREE EXPRESSION IN PRESS. MEETINGS ARE RESULT OF ROKG ORDER THAT PRESS REFRAIN FROM COVERING INTRAMURAL STUDENT PROTESTS, VIETNAM SITUATION, AND LOCAL HOUSEWIFE FUEL COMPLAINTS, AS WELL AS RECENT SPATE OF ROKG PICK-UP AND INTERROGATIONS OF PRESS PEOPLE (REFTEL. NDP REACTS. END SUMMARY.

2. REPORTERS FROM HANGKUK ILBO, CHOSUN ILBO, CHUNGANG ILBO, AND TONGA ILBO AND TONGA RADIO HAVE MET AND ISSUED ESSENTIALLY SAME RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF TRULY FREE PRESS. PRESS HAS CARRIED FULL TEXTS. RONGA ILBO RESOLUTION, FOR EXAMPLE, CALLS ON ROKG TO OBSERVE FOLLOWING:

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(A) ELIMINATE OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN KOREAN PRESS AGENCIES;

(B) OPPOSE RESOLUTELY INTERFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES (KCIA) IN PRESS;

(C) OPPOSE "ILLEGAL" PICK-UP OF REPORTERS FOR INTERROGATION; AND

(D) ALLOW NEWS ARTICLES ON FOREGOING MEETINGS AND RESOLUTIONS BE PUBLISHED.

3. JOURNALISTS ALSO PROTESTED PICK-UP OF VARIOUS NEWSPAPER OFFICIALS ON OCT 22 (REFTEL) AS "GREAT INFRINGEMENT OF FREEDOM OF PRESS." USIS SOURCES REPORT THAT ALL THOSE HELD BY KCIA WERE RELEASED BY 1130 HOURS ON OCT 23. THESE INCLUDE CHANG KANG-JE, EDITOR PUBLISHER OF HANGKUK ILBO, MANAGING EDITOR AND MAKE-UP EDITOR OF HANGKUK ILBO, PLUS MANAGING EDITOR, LOCAL NEWS EDITOR AND CITY EDITOR OF TONGA ILBO.

4. USIS SOURCES SAY APPROXIMATELY 150 REPORTERS FROM TONGA ILBO ENGAGED IN SIT-DOWN STRIKE UNTIL JOURNALISTS HAD BEEN RELEASED. THEY FURTHER STATED THAT TONGA JOURNALISTS WERE "ASHAMED" THAT CAUSE OF PRESS FREEDOM SHOULD HAVE TO BE ESPOUSED FIRST BY STUDENTS, IMPLICITLY CRITICIZING TONGA AND OTHER PUBLISHERS FOR FAILURE TO PROTEST PRESS REPRESSION. HANGKUK ILBO REPORTERS REPORTEDLY STAYED IN PRESS OFFICES OCT 22, 23 AND 24 IN PROTEST OVER PICK-UP OF THEIR OWN FELLOW PRESSMEN. CHOSUN ILBO AND CHUNGANG ILBO ALSO HAVE ALSO PROTESTED AND REPORTED FACTS OF OVERALL PRESS PROTEST IN THEIR OCT 25 EDITIONS. ALL PROTEST HAS BEEN COVERED FULLY IN KOREAN LANGUAGE PRESS.

5. NDP HELD SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL MEETING AT 0900 HOURS OCT 25, UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTING STATEMENT WHICH "DENOUNCED GOVERNMENT FOR OPPRESSION AND MANIPULATION OF PRESS RESULTING IN TOTAL DEPRIVATION OF PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW. STATEMENT DENOUNCED "OPPRESSION ON CAMPUSES AND OF RELIGIOUS CIRCLES AND NOTED THAT KCIA HAD PICKED UP AND INTERROGATED PUBLISHERS AND REPORTERS OF VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS IN PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 21 THROUGH OCT 23 (PARA 3). KIM YONG-SAM HAS REPORTEDLY INSTRUCTED NDP MEMBERS OF NATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSEMBLY'S INFORMATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE TO REQUEST THAT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION BE INTERPELLATED ON THESE RECENT PRESS PROTESTS.

6. EMBOFFS ARE BEING TOLD BY BOTH JOURNALISTS AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS THAT GOVERNMENT WILL NOT PERMIT NEWSPAPER PROTESTS TO CONTINUE WITHOUT CRACKING DOWN SOMEWHERE.

7. COMMENT: NEW PRESS ACTIVISM COMES JUST AS NDP IS
MOUNTING MAJOR EFFORT IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO WIN
CONSIDERATION FOR ITS PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
AND OTHER POLITICAL BILLS. ALSO SEVERAL MAJOR UNIVERSITIES
ARE DUE TO REOPEN WEEK OF OCT 27. CUMMULATIVE EFFECT OF
EFFORTS BY VARIOUS ANTI-GOVERNMENT SECTIOS GIVES
PROMISES OF AN ACTIVE WEEK WHICH SHOULD KEEP THE
GOVERNMENT HOPPING.
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